



What is Blogging?

Blog is the short name for 'WebLog', which is effectively an online diary. Blogging is the process of creating a blog, and then adding posts (entries) to that blog.

Blogs have increased in popularity over the years, and you can now find people using blogs to document everything from holidays to large business projects.

Links

www.blogger.com

By far the most popular blogging site. Blogger is owned and operated by Google. It is simple and free to setup a blog at this site - you will however need a valid email address.

So what's all the hype?

As with Podcasts, in a way the hype surrounding blogging is overrated, for a blog is nothing more than a simple website. The simplicity in creating and maintaining a blog however is what has resulted in their huge popularity. It is now possible for anyone with a computer to quickly and simply setup their own blog from which they can address the world.

How can I create a blog?

A single account with www.blogger.com can have any number of blogs associated with it.


- 1) Create a new account at www.blogger.com, by clicking 'Create Your Blog Now'. The details you enter here will be used by the children to login, so keep the username and password simple.



CREATE YOUR BLOG NOW

- 2) Create as many Blogs as you need. (see 'Be Careful' below). You might decide to create one blog for each group for example.
- 3) Experiment with different Blog styles, by clicking 'Layout' next to the relevant blog, and then 'Pick New Template'.

Once the blogs have been created, the children are ready to add a post to the blog.

- 1) If not already logged in, log in using the details supplied in step 1 above.
- 2) Click on 'Add Post' next to the blog you wish to post to.
- 3) Provide a suitable title for the post, and then start typing.
- 4) To add a photo, click the 'image' icon () and follow the onscreen instructions.
- 4) Click the 'Publish' button. Your post is now uploaded and ready to view.

Be careful



Since Blogs are online, they are immediately available to a global audience. Never use full names on the internet, and always ensure photos of children are group shots and only of children permitted to have their photo taken.

Protect your children by disabling user comments by default, and selecting not to add your blog to the list of blogs available.



How can Blogging be used in school?

As with Podcasting, Blogging works excellently with any work that is incremental in nature. Blogs are ideally suited to documenting ongoing projects and sharing news (PTFA/School Council meetings etc.).

Documenting an ongoing project

Blogging is an excellent way of keeping a rolling record of the progress of an ongoing project. This could be the planning and construction of a new wildlife area for example, or the documentation of new things that have been learnt in a term's topic, for example the Aztecs.

Sharing information

As Blogs are immediately available on the internet, they are an excellent way of easily sharing information. This may be shared with other classes (School Council announcements), other schools (sharing information with foreign schools) or the parents (allowing them to see what their child has been working on).

Discussion forums

Blogs can be setup to allow comments from their readers. **This feature should be used with caution, and should only ever be activated to allow comments from selected users.** Once setup however, it could be used to invite comments on a particular topic, for example the theme of 'Red Nose Day'. Each class could login to add their comments.

What are the advantages of Blogging over traditional pen and paper techniques?

In many of the applications suggested above, traditional pen and paper techniques could (and should) be used. However, Blogging does hold some broad advantages over these traditional written techniques.

Motivation

Blogging is an excellent way for children to present and share their work, which they all love doing. Knowing they have a global audience can help motivate reluctant writers.

Record of Work

Simply by using a Blog you have an immediate record of a child's progression, as each blog post (entry) is automatically dated and time stamped. This provides an excellent way of seeing how a child's literacy (and ICT) skills have developed over time.

Accessibility of information

Since blogs are stored on the Internet, they are immediately available to parents at home. Although this carries some disadvantages, it does also help raise parents' awareness of the work their children are doing. This allows them to be more involved in their child's learning.

Multimedia

Blogging makes it easy to combine text and pictures, without the need for expensive copies to be made.